Past Pursuits

A Newsletter of the Special Collections Division of the Akron-Summit County Public Library

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Welsh Ancestors of Summit County

Cheri Goldner, Librarian

"Good Welshmen make good Americans," George Washington is credited with saying, and his fellow Americans apparently agreed. While the Welsh spoke their own language and had a reputation for being more clannish than other British immigrants, they were also skilled, hardworking and literate. By many accounts, they assimilated and, feeling no loyalty to the English throne, naturalized quickly. For these reasons, Americans did not consider them foreigners in the same sense that they did some other immigrant groups.

Like immigrants from so many other countries, the Welsh viewed America as a land of opportunity. The earliest Welsh immigrants were religious dissenters, Baptists who settled in Plymouth Colony in 1663 and who moved on to Rhode Island after disagreements with the Puritans. Twenty years later, a group of Quakers from Wales established the second Welsh settlement in this country after purchasing land from William Penn in what would become the colony of Pennsylvania.

Welsh immigration slowed in the late 1700s (continued on page 2)

H. Evan Williams (1867-1918) grew up in the Welsh mining community of Thomastown, now in East Akron, and became "America's greatest tenor."

In this issue

2008 History Trails: Our Historic Neighborhoods 2
Summit County Chapter of OGS Honored 2
Updated House History Guide 5
New Book on Historic Akron Churches 5
Kenley Players Collection Donated 5
Every City Has a Few: Akron's Hotels Part II 6
New Summit County Veterans Resource 9
A New Workshop: Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors 9
New Databases 9
Summit Memory Updates 9
The Riots of 1968 10
On Exhibit 11
Local History & Genealogy Events 11
Gifts to Special Collections 13
New to the Collection 14

2008 History Trails: Our Historic Neighborhoods

The Akron History Trails program returns for its third year of celebrating our community's heritage. Sponsored by the partners of the Lock 3 Akron History Museum and underwritten by the City of Akron and the Summit County Historical Society, this year focuses on our fascinating neighborhoods.

From the Italian roots of North Hill to the urban village atmosphere of Highland Square, many of our neighborhoods have nurtured Akron's immigrants and their continuing growth. Some of our neighborhoods, Goodyear Heights and Firestone Park, capture the spirits of the entrepreneurs who envisioned them, while others, like Ellet and Kenmore, retain independent identities within the metropolitan area. Visiting our neighborhoods, takes us back through time to remember our heritage and to appreciate the cultural richness their diversity adds to our city.

A new History Trails booklet featuring historic sites in each of our city's neighborhoods will include a page for "passport" stamps. Stamps can be obtained at designated sites in each neighborhood. All who complete the passport will become eligible for prizes to be awarded at an event in the fall.

The program kicks off in the first week of July. Passports will be available from participating institutions as well as at Lock 3. For more information on this year's program please visit, http://www.ci.akron.oh.us/.

Summit County Chapter of OGS Honored

At the Ohio Genealogical Society (OGS) conference in Cincinnati in April, our own Summit County Chapter was the recipient of two awards, the *Frances Dana Gage Award* for Outstanding OGS Chapter Newsletter and the *U.S. Grant Book Award* for the CD of the *1881 Perrin's History of Summit County, Ohio.* This CD consists of the 1972 indexed edition of the book produced by the Chapter. Congratulations to the Summit County Chapter of OGS!

Welsh Ancestors (continued)

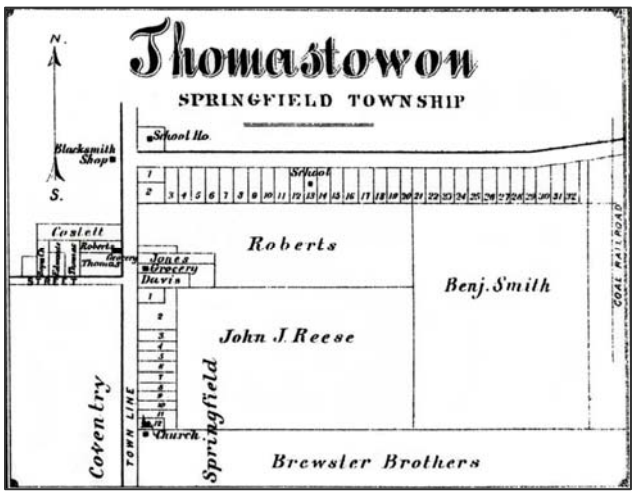
and almost completely stopped for several decades following American independence from Great Britain. In the 1800s, however, Baptists and Quakers began arriving again, joined by Anglicans and Presbyterians. Later in the 19th century, as the United States industrialized, immigration picked up. During this period, the Welsh began leaving their homeland for more than religious reasons. Farmers sought to escape an agricultural depression and poor treatment by their Church of England landlords. Industrial workers faced a slowing economy as well, and many miners and quarrymen chose to look for new jobs in a new land. They were joined by tinplate workers who lost work as a result of the highly unpopular McKinley Tariff of 1890, which resulted in the highest protective tariff in American history to that point and cut the exportation of Welsh tinplate to the United States dramatically.

Over one third of the Welsh immigrants arriving during this later wave of immigration settled in Pennsylvania, most of them in the anthracite coal regions of the Wilkes-Barre and Scranton areas and in the bituminous coal and steel center of Pittsburgh. Others settled in similarly industrial regions in neighboring New York and Ohio. Welsh miners later moved on to the copper and coalfields of Colorado and, once the west opened up, to the goldmines of California. Farmers migrated deeper into the Midwest - to Wisconsin, Iowa and Kansas - following the Civil War.

The first Welsh immigrants in Ohio traveled down the Ohio River from Pennsylvania to the Muskingum River and then proceeded north to Zanesville. As more Welsh followed in their wake, some traveled along Zane's Trace, an early road in the Northwest Territory that connected present-day Wheeling, West Virginia, to Maysville, Kentucky. Many of these Welsh settled in what is now Licking County, in the community of Welsh Hills. Others settled further south, in Jackson and Gallia counties, as detailed by Anne Kelly Knowles in her book *Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio's Industrial Frontier*. Still others settled in northeast Ohio, including Summit County.

The 1850 census, the first to record birthplace, reveals 21 individuals of Welsh birth living in Summit County. While it remained less than two percent of the county's total population, Summit County's Welsh-born population grew significantly, to 131 and then to 614 in 1860 and 1870, and hit a high of 704 in 1880. The number stayed between 400 and 500 from 1900-1920 and then dropped down to 250 in 1930.

Census figures, 19th century Summit County atlases, and the State of Ohio's interactive map of former mines accessible at www.dnr.state.oh.us/website/geosurvey/omsiua/home.htm show that the Welsh population tended to cluster around the local coal mines during the population spike in 1880 and then shifted to Akron, presumably as the Welsh found new jobs there when the mines closed. In 1870, more than half (330) of Summit County's Welsh lived in coal-rich Springfield and Coventry Townships. Spanning the two townships was the settlement of Thomastown, home to the Brewster family and its coal companies, as well as to many more of the county's older Welsh families. The town had its own school and two Welsh churches, the Welsh Congregational Church and Thomastown Baptist Church, which later became Springfield Baptist Church and now serves a new immigrant population—members of the Karen (pronounced Kahr-en) community who fled the military regime in Myanmar or Burma.



Thomastown, in East Akron was home to many of Summit County's early Welsh immigrants. It was later annexed by the city of Akron.

In addition to its school and churches, further evidence of the vitality of the Thomastown community can be found in the *Akron Beacon Journal's* society pages in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where local news and events were recorded regularly and contained numerous instances of Welsh surnames such as Williams, Davis, Morgan, Jones and Thomas. An article in the November 15, 1931 issue of the *Akron Times Press* on the occasion of resident Levi Morgan's 92nd birthday also provides a glimpse into the community. Morgan is described by reporter John A. Botzum as "the last survivor of the historic Welsh settlement and the oldest living coal miner in these parts."

Morgan came to the U.S. in 1863, on the same ship as his future wife, Ann Williams. "I shall never forget the day I came out here," he recalled, "the Brewsters had just opened up another coal mine. When I arrived in Akron I asked the way out to Thomastown and then I walked the five miles thru the mud, and here I have been ever since." Morgan lived at 1074 Triplett Boulevard across the street from the Baptist church, near present-day Clement Street, east of the intersection of Triplett and South Arlington Street. His home was the former Middlebury Shaft School, built around 1855.

Morgan recalled that most of his neighbors were Welsh (there were also a few Irish), that they spoke Welsh in the mines, on the streets, in the homes and in the churches and that they were always singing. Later, when work in the mines slowed down, Morgan worked in another of Springfield Township's industries, the clay industry, and for B. F. Goodrich Rubber Co. Morgan had 13 children. One daughter, Margaret, married perhaps the most well-known resident of Thomastown, world-famous tenor H. Evan Williams. "It was out here in Thomastown that Williams commenced to sing in the school houses and churches and down in the mines," Levi Morgan explains, "Then the world discovered him and took him away from us, but he never forgot Thomastown and his old friends."

Williams, pictured on page 1, was featured in an article by Mark Price in the May 14, 2007 *Akron Beacon Journal.* Born in Trumbull County in 1867,

he and his brother were sent to live with relatives in Thomastown after their mother died. After being discovered by a voice teacher from Cleveland, he began taking voice lessons and within a few years was traveling the world to perform. Among his career highlights were leading the Tuesday Musical Club to a gold medal at the National Eisteddfod (a Welsh festival of singing, literature and performance) in Canton and, in 1910, performing at the White House for President William Howard Taft with soprano Gertrude Seiberling, wife of Goodyear founder Franklin Augustus Seiberling. Williams gave his final concert at the Akron Armory in May of 1918 and died later that year at the age of 51. Other prominent local Welsh included Congressman W. Aubrey Thomas, a frequent speaker at Welsh society picnics, and John W. Thomas, a son of Welsh parents who walked 4 ½ miles every day from his family farm to attend Buchtel College and later became Chairman of the Board of Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.

Thomastown, which was eventually annexed to Akron in 1928, may have been the largest Welsh settlement in Summit County but it wasn't alone. Another such town was Dennison Station, also known as simply Dennison or as Sherman, after a post office of that name was located there in 1864. Located in the western part of the township along the Atlantic and Great Western Railway (later the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio Railroad Company), the area was rich in coal and was therefore attractive to Welsh immigrants. Along with its connections to the railroad and coal industries, the Dennison area is probably most noted as the site where a long-standing feud between coal miners Joseph Welsh and Robert McLister culminated in McLister's fatal shooting of Welsh on November 29, 1884. Authorities brought McLister before Akron mayor Samuel Lane for questioning, and Lane provides a detailed account of the events in his 1892 book *Fifty Years and Over of Akron and Summit County.*

Tallmadge too, was rich in coal and thus became home to a number of Welsh. In fact, the story goes that it was a woodchuck digging a burrow near Tallmadge that led to the discovery of high-quality coal in Summit County. Local author Judy Anne Davis provides a thorough account of the story in her book *A History of Tallmadge Coal: a Tale of Woodchucks, Welshmen, and a Canal.*

Summit County's Welsh didn't just sing in their own homes and immediate communities, they shared their music with others across the county, state and nation at picnics, public appearances and singing competitions. Early 20th century editions of the *Beacon* include multiple accounts of concerts given in honor of St. David (the patron saint of Wales), of annual reunions at Silver Lake, and of the official business of the Welsh societies. One group called the Summit County Welsh Association held its 5th annual picnic in 1908, while another, perhaps a reincarnation of this group, was incorporated in November 13, 1911. The picnics at Silver Lake extended beyond these local groups however, with attendees traveling from Cleveland, Youngstown and Canton.

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The 5th Annual Picnic

— OF THE —

SUMMIT COUNTY
WELSH ASSOCIATION

TO BE HELD AT

Silver Lake, June 24th, 1908.

D. J. THOMAS, President.....Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.
D. H. RICHARDS, Vice-President.....Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.
HENRY THOMAS, Sec. and Treas....Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

D. J. THOMAS, Cuyahoga Falls, O. T. J. DAVIS.....Barberton, O.
CYRUS EVANS,..Wadsworth, O. W. H. EVANS.....Akron, O.
J. D. JONES.....Hametown, O. W. J. EVANS, SR...Sherman, O.
ED. DAVIES.....Akron, O.

CELEBRITIES TO BE PRESENT.

H. EVAN WILLIAMS..Akron, O. REV. EVANS.....Wayland, O.
I. T. DANIELS.....Canton, O. REV. J. T. MORGAN, Cleveland.
HON. W. A. THOMAS...Niles, O. And Others.

From the Frank E. Lawrence Collection held by Special Collections and housed at the Tallmadge Branch.

The 2000 census reported there were 1,753,794 people of Welsh descent living in the United States. If you are one of those people and are researching your family history, there are resources available to you in Special Collections, including the specialized manuals *Welsh Family History: A Guide to Research* and *Second Stages in Researching Welsh Ancestry*, both edited by John Rowlands. A number of more general guides on researching British ancestors are also available and more sources are available online.

An online source of particular interest to Ohioans of Welsh descent is that of the Wales-Ohio Project, http://ohio.llgc.org.uk/, which includes almost 5,000 digital images of archive and manuscript material, printed material, maps and photographs relating to the state of Ohio held at The National Library of Wales. Among the digitized items is a small notebook written in 1851 by R. D. Thomas while he was traveling in the United States to raise money to pay for the debts of his chapels. Thomas visited many Welsh settlements in the state of Ohio and recorded his observations in a notebook. Among the places he visited was Tallmadge. Another online resource is the Welsh American Academy, www.welshamericanacademy.org, a group who purpose is "to celebrate the close cultural, historical and educational links between Wales and North American." The Academy offers a variety of exchange programs for students, scholars and artists and provides support for those tracing their Welsh roots and planning a visit to Wales.

Updated House History Guide

Interested in knowing more about the history of your house? A new edition of *Your Old House: Researching and Renovating Your Home* is now available. Created by the Special Collections Division with input from various organizations in our community, this guide provides tips for discovering the history of your house, as well as resources for historic home restoration and renovation. Special thanks to Mary Deal of Progress Through Preservation for reviewing it prior to publication. The guide is available in Special Collections or online.

New Book on Historic Akron Churches

Local writer and preservationist Kally Mavromatis is the author of a new book on historic churches in Akron. Through text and photographs, *Akron Churches: Early Architecture* (Arcadia Press, 2008) tells the stories of many of our community's oldest churches, how they developed, who founded them, and the church buildings that have come and gone. Mavromatis worked closely with local churches and archives to uncover the remarkable stories of these churches. Her research uncovered photographs rarely seen by the public. Arranged by architectural style, the book features photographs and text that explore the evolution of some of Akron's earliest churches. Mavromatis is to be commended for her contribution to this important aspect of our community's rich history.

Kenley Players Collection Donated to Special Collections

Paul Lynde, Mitzi Gaynor, Micky Rooney, Cyd Charisse, and Akron's own Jesse White are just some of the stars featured in photographs taken by Akron photographer Ott Gangl for the Kenley Players Summer Theater. Founded in 1950 by veteran actor and producer John Kenley, the summer theater company presented musicals featuring popular stars of television and Hollywood in Akron, Warren, Detroit, Dayton, and other industrial cities. From the late 1970s through the early 1980s, Ott provided all of the publicity photography for Kenley Players at E. J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall. Photographs were shot at the Monday dress rehearsal and sent on to the next venue for advance publicity.

Ott's collection includes hundreds of photographs and negatives from his time as official photographer for the company. In addition to this collection, Special Collections also maintains the photographs he took as official photographer for the Ohio Ballet, as well as a collection of his personal work and those taken during his time as a photographer for the *Akron Beacon Journal*. We are most grateful to Ott for this generous donation.

Every City Has A Few: Akron's Hotels Part II: 1912 – Present

By Jane Gramlich, Librarian

Look in the business listings of any Akron city directory from the 1910s through the 1960s, and you'll find dozens of downtown hotels whose stories have disappeared and whose names – some of them pretty comical – aren't well remembered. Could anyone forget the King's Dollar Hotel, or the Gilt Edge, or the Great Presto? If our lack of sources on them is any indication, yes. Maybe they just weren't that memorable to begin with.

We can catch glimpses of some of the lesser-known hotels here and there, in ads or news stories. Some of them had unusual histories, like the Taylor Hotel. This started out as a mansion, developed into a rowdy theatrical boarding house, sheltered World War I era workers who shared beds by sleeping in shifts, then finally quieted down as a residence for teachers and clergy. According to a 1969 *Akron Beacon Journal* article, it was supposed to have been the third largest hotel in the city during the 1950s. Other smaller establishments had quite significant histories, like the 55-room Mathews Hotel on North Howard Street. It gave African Americans a place to stay during a time when they were barred from other downtown lodgings, and as part of the area's vibrant music scene, hosted jazz icons Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway, and Louis Armstrong while they were on tour.

By 1912, the city had witnessed the rise and fall of the Empire and the Clarendon Hotels and was beginning to see the Buchtel languish, but could be proud of the newest hotel, the Portage. Over the next fifty years, the story of the city's hotels was much the same, writ large: more hotels and larger ones, equaling greater ballyhoo as they opened, bigger business as they operated, and unfortunately, messier decay as they declined. Suburban development and the downslide of industry combined to make locations near malls and interstates more popular, and the number of downtown hotels gradually dwindled. Today, we continue to question whether we need new downtown accommodations, or whether we can even sustain the ones we have.

The increase in hotel operations during Akron's boom years around World War I was not missed by the *Beacon*. "Now there are three first class hostelries in operation and two more projected," it reported. Since Ferdinand Schumacher's death in 1908, the Windsor Hotel had undergone both change of ownership and business practice. After some renovation, it became the New Windsor in 1915. Definitely no longer a temperance hotel, it harbored a speakeasy in its basement during Prohibition. Also in 1915, the 11-story Howe Hotel opened on South Main Street, and by 1917, the Portage had expanded with two additions increasing its number of rooms from 170 to 280. The Bond Hotel, just down the street from the Howe, opened in 1918, and the Marne, across from what is now Canal Park, appeared in 1921.

Once again, though, city officials weren't satisfied with what they had and were on the lookout for a hotel "in keeping with [Akron's] high standing as in important manufacturing city." The result of this round of efforts was the Art Deco styled, 450-room Mayflower Hotel. It opened on May 18, 1931 with the obligatory dinner party celebration, attended by 800 people who sampled dishes like "fresh shrimp ravigot" and "new potato persillade." The *Official Souvenir of the Opening of the Mayflower Hotel* wasted no time promoting all the wonderful features to be found in the building, including chilled drinking water and a four-station radio in every room. Apparently, an early form of air conditioning was also used: "Mere circulation of air in the dining room is not sufficient when the weather is warm," the *Souvenir* sniffed. "The air must first be cooled, then gently distributed."

The Mayflower Hotel has the reputation of being the pinnacle of Akron's hotels. Its size, décor, amenities, events, and the sheer number of people passing through its doors don't seem to have been equaled by any downtown hotel since. Part of that feeling may be nostalgia. But it is true that the

Mayflower arrived during the golden age of the urban downtown, from the 1920s through the mid-1960s. Business, commerce, and entertainment were all concentrated within a few city blocks, and hotels were both the natural, necessary outgrowth of that, and the focus of much of it. The lower floors of a hotel weren't just places for restaurants, bars, and conference rooms; they also provided retail space and entertainment venues. If you needed aspirin or wanted a soda, you could visit Rutledge's Drug Store at the foot of the Mayflower. If you wanted to dance all evening to the music of a big band, you might consider going to the Mayflower's Hawaiian Room. Even if you just wanted to go to a movie, you could find yourself at the Marne, where the first three floors were the Allen Theater.

The Mayflower Hotel appeared on the cover of the Akron Topics Magazine in 1931.

With so much activity, it couldn't have been long before historic occasions took place in Akron's hotels. One of the important events the Mayflower is remembered for is its role in the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935, when Bill Wilson made a crucial phone call leading to his meeting with Dr. Bob. But we shouldn't forget that the Portage Hotel was also the scene of significant developments that happened about the same time.

In September 1935, after years of struggling with reduced workweeks and Depression Era shortages, rubber workers organized and founded the United Rubber Workers Union in the ballroom of the Portage. In addition, the Portage's most striking and unique feature was a café called the Rubber Room, which opened in 1934. This little bit of Americana could only have existed in Akron. Nearly everything in the room was made out of rubber, including ceiling lighting fixtures rimmed with tires, and mosaic-like murals depicting the origin and processing of rubber, from plant to finished product. In 1963, after the Portage had been sold, its new owners found the Rubber Room in need of renovation. They attempted to find a permanent home for the murals and other objects but got no takers, and so a treasure trove of history sadly ended up in the trash. It's interesting to note that the founding of AA at the Mayflower remains strong in our collective memory, whereas the Rubber Room and the URW at the Portage are scarcely noted. Perhaps that's because the Mayflower still stands, and the yearly pilgrimage of AA members on Founders' Day keeps the memory alive. On the other hand, the Portage is long gone, right along with Akron's role in rubber production.

The combination of the opening of the Mayflower and the losses of the Depression caused many of the downtown hotels to flounder, decline, and never quite recover. Some attempted the usual fixes; the Bond Hotel was renamed the Anthony Wayne and adopted a Colonial theme and décor much like the Mayflower. The Windsor Hotel, cheaper to demolish than maintain, was torn down to make room for a gas station in 1933. During the early and mid-1940s, while the Mayflower sailed along smoothly, the Buchtel Hotel was on its last legs. Condemned and ordered to be razed by 1940, it took seven years before demolition actually happened. Its manager claimed there wasn't anything wrong with the place "that soap and water and paint can't cure." But at its demise, those who remembered its glory days said they weren't sorry to see it go and wished it had been torn down years earlier, "before it became a tarnished and poverty-stricken shadow of its old self."

"New York has the Waldorf, Washington its plushy Shoreham. Here in Akron, it's the Mayflower," proclaimed the *Beacon* in a 1953 article. "There's always activity [there]." During the previous year, over 165,000 people had registered at the Mayflower, and it hosted ten weekly meetings of various civic clubs and twelve monthly ones. But even as it continued to prosper, the Mayflower was not immune to change. In 1955, the Mayflower lost its local ownership to the Sheraton chain. Its name immediately switched to the Sheraton-Mayflower and predictably, two years later, to just the Sheraton. Only twenty-five years after its grand opening, the legendary Mayflower was already becoming a thing of the past. New projects and trends were taking shape. Two hotels made their appearances over the next decade and a half: The Akron Tower Motor Inn, which opened in 1960 on the corner of State and Water Streets, and the Holiday Inn in Cascade Plaza, which opened in 1971. Ironically, the Mayflower had closed its doors just five months earlier, almost exactly forty years after it opened, its owners citing the slow economy and the popularity of suburban motels.

The 1970s saw the conversion of many of the old downtown hotels into low–income or subsidized housing. This wasn't entirely a new concept; early hotels often became boarding houses, providing residence for the elderly or people who could not afford traditional housing. In the 1950s, a *Beacon* article described "two old hotels once condemned" on South Main that were now "delighting Akron social workers." A woman named Mrs. Dillman ran them as the Dillman Rooms in cooperation with various city and county agencies. This pattern repeated itself on a larger scale with most of the remaining hotels. By 1969, the Portage had become a nursing home, and by 1978 it stood vacant. The Akron Tower Motor Inn's short and rocky existence as a hotel came to an end in 1975 when it was converted into housing for the elderly and disabled, and renamed Canal Park Tower. After a vacancy of two years, the Mayflower reopened as an apartment complex, and by 1980 it had been taken over by AMHA to become Mayflower Manor. The Anthony Wayne followed much the same path. A 1982 *Beacon* article summed it up grimly, noting that "The Anthony Wayne…old and showing its age, is that kind of hotel. Every city has a few."

So far, the Holiday Inn (later to become a Radisson) has been the last downtown hotel to be built from the ground up. When the Quaker Square Hilton opened in 1980, it was a novelty in more ways than one. "Sleeping in a silo: it's sort of romantic, don't you think?" mused a *Beacon* reporter, not too convincingly. At the time, those involved in the hotel's renovation said the only other place in the world where grain bins had been converted to living space was in Barcelona. The Quaker Square Hilton was a rare hotel idea to come to fruition during that time. The 1980s brought other ideas that never got off the ground. Developers tried, but failed to make the historic Portage Hotel into apartments, and a proposal to make the former Polsky's building into a $32 million luxury hotel went nowhere. The writing on the wall was clear: the rapid development of motel space in Montrose was spelling the slow and painful demise of some grand old landmarks. The Portage, vacant for 15 years, toppled in 1992; the Anthony Wayne was demolished in 1996 to make way for Canal Park; and the Howe Hotel crumbled just two years later. Now, even Canal Park Tower is gone, and the future of the Radisson is once again in question. Perhaps the most startling thing to realize is that the Crowne Plaza at Quaker Square, our most recently opened hotel, has just become our most recently closed one, having been taken over by the University of Akron for student housing.

Hotelier Ferdinand Schumacher, adept at adaptive building reuse, might have liked the idea that the Quaker Oats silos became not only a hotel, but dorm rooms. Is this notable old structure doomed to dust? Will the Mayflower come crashing down anytime soon? As the Buchtel Hotel faced demolition, the *Beacon* noted that "in the march of progress it is sometimes necessary to raze old landmarks – buildings about which there linger fond memories." Quaker Square is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and a portion of South Main Street, including the Mayflower, has recently been recommended to U.S. Department of the Interior for possible inclusion on the National Register. This

won't guarantee these buildings won't be torn down, but if we're lucky, they'll remain with us for a while. If they don't, we can at least focus on keeping those fond memories intact.

New Summit County Veterans Resource

For more than a year, the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society worked on an ambitious project to document every Summit County veteran from every conflict. Headed by the chapter's Cemetery Chair, Judy Davis, a team of volunteers has created a CD containing the names of 60,000 Summit County Veterans. Each record includes the name, conflict, rank, branch of service, and death and burial information. A special presentation of the CD was made on Saturday, May 17 at the Acker Moore Memorial Hall-American Legion VFW post in Stow. The CD is available from the Chapter. For more information, please visit http://www.acorn.net/gen/

A New Workshop: Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors

Most of us will find immigrant ancestors somewhere in our family tree. Their travels to the United States and along the path to U.S. citizenship are often documented, but finding these records is sometimes a challenge. Join staff from the Special Collections Division for a discussion of identifying immigrant ancestors and locating passenger lists and naturalization records. As we will be using electronic resources, basic computer skills are recommended. You have several opportunities to attend this workshop. It meets in Computer Lab 2—First Floor, Main Library on the following dates and times:

Saturday, August 16, 10 am-12 pm
Tuesday, September 30, 6:30-8:30 pm
Saturday, October 18, 10 am-12 pm
Tuesday, November 18, 6:30-8:30 pm

For more information and to sign up, contact the Special Collections Division, 330.643.9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org.

New Databases

With more than 32 million documents and images available, **Footnote.com** can be an amazing resource. In addition to the historical newspapers and naturalization documents, Footnote, in partnership with the National Archives, has also made available Revolutionary and Civil War Pension Indexes and photographs. Other colonial records such as the *Pennsylvania Archives* and federal records such as the *Southern Claims Commission* are also fully searchable online. Premium access to these documents is available from Main Library.

The library now also subscribes to **World Vital Records** (WVR). This site contains a mix of free and subscription content that is continuously updated. Not all of the content on WVR is unique, but it does provide a one-stop research tool for genealogists. It contains not only U.S. Records but international ones as well. Some of the databases included are: Quintin Database (a collection of county histories, biographies, and city directories), SmallTownPapers Collections, International Parish Register Collection, International Marriages, World Gazetteer Collection, Find A Grave, Family Search, Everton Publishers and more. It also features "Recently Added Major Collections" and "Genealogy News" so you can always find out the most recent updates to all of the databases within WVR.

Summit Memory Updates

Each month nearly 15,000 images are retrieved from www.SummitMemory.org's database. We have also recently added another new partner, Cuyahoga Falls Historical Society, and several new collections.

The Doodlebug Disaster Collection contains more than 40 images and text about the 1940 train wreck in Cuyahoga Falls and the 2005 Memorial Ceremony commemorating the disaster. This collection was contributed by the Cuyahoga Falls Historical Society.

The High Bridge Glens Collection contains approximately 40 images relating to one of the oldest parks in Cuyahoga Falls. The collection was

contributed by the Cuyahoga Falls Historical Society.

The Art Work of Akron Collection contains the more than 50 images from the book, *Art Work of Akron* published in 1898. These 19th century photographs capture the growth of the Akron-Summit County area during the 1890s.

For more information on becoming a partner or loaning a private collection for inclusion in the Summit Memory Project, please contact Joanne O'Dell at jodell@akronlibrary.org or 330.643.9064.

The Riots of 1968

By Iris Bolar, Librarian

It's been forty years since Akron experienced several days of civil disorder. In July of 1968, the general mood here and around the country was that of tension and rebellion. Dark clouds had already cast shadows over the nation: Vietnam War images were broadcast into American homes; Martin Luther King Jr. had been slain in April; and Robert Kennedy had been killed in June. Violence, anger, frustration – emotions had reached the boiling point across the United States.

Riots had erupted in Washington D.C., Chicago and other cities. The feeling in Akron was that the violent protests other communities were experiencing could not happen here. Yes, Akron had its poverty, unemployment, and racial problems, but it was not considered a city of extremes.

The trouble here didn't begin with a racial incident. The week of chaos began on Tuesday, July 16th when fighting broke out at an Elizabeth Park dance between black teenagers of rival north and west side neighborhoods. When police came to break up the fight, the teens surrounded the police cruiser and threw rocks through the windshield. The incident ended with two arrests for intoxication. The rivalry continued on the evening of July 17th when two off-duty African-American police officers responded to teenagers breaking windows around Wooster Avenue (now Vernon Odom Boulevard). The teens threw bottles at one of the officers, and he fired his gun into the air. More police were called to the scene. A rumor began to circulate that the police were shooting black people.

In the early hours of July 18th, a crowd had gathered in the area and created more disruption. Later that morning, National Guardsmen were called, and Mayor John Ballard proclaimed a state of emergency in the city. A city-wide curfew was imposed, but its enforcement was seen as inconsistently applied around the city for different classes of people. National Guardsmen marched down Wooster Avenue with unloaded guns and used tear gas to try to disperse the crowd. Some law enforcement officers failed to distinguish between those trying to resolve the conflict and those participating in the rioting.

Businesses in the Wooster Avenue area were looted and boarded up; many closed for good. Fires broke-out during the days of disorder, but it was found that the majority of them were started by one 11-year-old rather than by the demonstrators. The 1969 report from the commission created to review the events stated that "there were some persons and groups who were receptive to trouble and willing to encourage and accentuate it." There were confrontations between younger and older black leaders during the troubled days. The younger generation was impatient with the approach of their elders in the call for social and economic changes.

Finally, after days of talks between the mayor and community leaders, the curfew was lifted on July 23rd, and hostilities eased. The night ended with music and dancing in the streets, and rain forced the crowd to seek shelter. No one was killed during the six days of rioting, but 40 people were injured and 400 were arrested. Property damage exceeded $100,000.

Although the rioting in Akron was not initially race-related, dissatisfaction and frustration with the economic and social status of African Americans did contribute to the build-up of emotions that rocked Wooster Avenue those hot, summer days in 1968. The issues that had fueled the discontent in Akron were dramatically forced to the forefront to be addressed by city leaders.

On Exhibit

AA and Akron: The First Steps
Third Floor, Special Collections

From June through September, Special Collections, in conjunction with the Akron Intergroup Council of Alcoholics Anonymous, will display an exhibit about the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and its roots in Akron. From its beginnings in 1935 to the present, Akron holds special interest for those who have struggled with alcoholism. The exhibit will feature photographs, documents, and artifacts pertaining to the organization's founding and the local sites associated with AA in Akron.

A related event will be the premiere of *God As We Understand Him: a Film About Faith and the 12 Step Movement,* a documentary produced by local filmmakers Josh Gippin and Shane Wynn. This film explores the spiritual aspects of AA and how they are embraced by individuals of different faith traditions. Two local premieres will be held during AA's Founder's Day weekend. On Saturday, June 7, the film will be shown at 11 am, 2 pm, and 4 pm on the grounds of Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens, the site of the first meeting of Dr. Bob Smith and Bill Wilson. On Sunday, June 8 at 2:30 it will be shown in the Main Library auditorium. Admission to both events is free. For more information, visit the filmmaker's website at www.joshuatreevideo.com. For more information about Founder's Day activities, visit the AA Akron Intergroup website at http://www.akronaa.org/.

Local History Events

Guided Walking Tours of the Park
Cascade Locks Park Association
Sunday, June 22, 1 pm
Come walk with one of our expert canal and Towpath guides and learn about the history of the Cascade Locks from lock 10 thru l6. Discover seven watered locks, historic railroad bridges and remains of a former steam plant. Then stop in the Mustill Store and stay for a cool drink and hear about CLPA's future plans for the Schumacher Mill site!

Vintage Base Ball - Akron Cup
Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens
Sunday, July 20, 10 am
Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens hosts the 12th Annual Akron Cup Vintage Base Ball Exhibition. The Akron Cup showcases base ball as it was played in the 1860s. Eight clubs compete and two "matches" take place simultaneously throughout the day. A variety of family-friendly "Vintage Sports" activities, including croquet, clock golf and side-saddle horseback riding demonstrations, round out the day. Families are encouraged to bring blankets or chairs to watch on Stan Hywet's Great Meadow.

Guided Walking Tours of the Park
Cascade Locks Parks Association
Sunday, July 27, 1 pm
Come walk with one of our expert canal and Towpath guides and learn about the history of the Cascade Locks from lock 10 thru l6. Discover seven watered locks, historic railroad bridges and remains of a former steam plant, then stop in the Mustill Store for a cool drink and hear about CLPA's future plans for the Schumacher Mill site!

Guided Walking Tours of the Park
Cascade Locks Parks Association
Sunday, August 24, 1 pm
Come walk with one of our expert canal and Towpath guides and learn about the history of the Cascade Locks from lock 10 thru l6. Discover seven watered locks, historic railroad bridges and remains of a former steam plant, then stop in the Mustill Store for a cool drink and hear about CLPA's future plans for the Schumacher Mill site!

Guided Walking Tours of the Park
Cascade Locks Parks Association
Sunday, September 28,1 pm
Come walk with one of our expert canal and Towpath guides and learn about the history of the Cascade Locks from lock 10 thru l6. Discover seven watered locks, historic railroad bridges and remains of a former steam plant, then stop in the Mustill Store for a cool drink and hear about CLPA's future plans for the Schumacher Mill site!

Hot Jazz on Howard Street "Puttin' on the Ritz"
Cascade Locks Parks Association
Saturday, August 16, 6 - 10:30pm
We are "Puttin' on the Ritz" with a stellar lineup of Jazz artists this year! We have Evelyn Wright, a popular Cleveland vocalist, backed up by Dan Wilson, Jr. and Jack Schantz, coordinator of Jazz Studies from U of A. Jazz group "Fhloism" will open. Come for dinner and drinks, enjoy the show, and take a chance at winning a week in Hilton Head, other golf packages, or a group train ride on Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, complete with food, drinks and a Jazz trio. Proceeds support our work in the development of the Cascade Locks Park.

Genealogy Events

National Conference and Annual Meeting
Ohio Chapter of the German Genealogy Society, Palatines to America
June 19 - 21, 2008
Join us at the Midwest Hotel and Conference Center, Columbus, OH for our National Conference and Meeting. The theme for this year is "Tune Up Your German Speaking Research." Online registration is available from the National Conference Registration site at http://palamnationalconference.org/registration/.

Who will be the Next Genealogist in your Family?
Summit County OGS
Saturday, June 21, 1 pm
Bring with you a young member of the family, a child, a grandchild, or even a teenager or 30 something! Now is the time to get the next generation involved in their family history and dispel the myth that genealogy is boring and just for old people! Don't miss this exciting afternoon with fun activities that you can take to a family reunion this summer! Join us at Akron-Summit County's Main Library.

Footnote.Com
Computer Assisted Genealogy Group
Saturday, June 21, 9:30 am – 2 pm
Join us at the Fairview Park Regional Library on Lorain Road for this mini-seminar presented by Brent Morgan. The morning session focuses on the database Footnote.com and the afternoon session offers the opportunity to share your genealogy dead-ends and look for solutions. For more information, see http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohcagg/.

Stitching a Family Quilt
Ohio Genealogical Society
June 22-27, 2008
Join us in Mansfield, Ohio for this week-long summer workshop. Topics include Revolutionary and Indian War Records; Researching in Ohio; War of 1812 Records; Migration Patterns into Ohio; Researching Our Female Ancestors; Quaker Migration into Ohio; and many others. For more information, please see http://ogs.org/workshop/.

Getting Started in Family History
Special Collections
Tuesday, July 15, 6:30 – 8 pm
This orientation includes an overview of the genealogical resources available at the Akron-Summit County Public Library, suggestions for getting started, and tips for organizing your research. Held at the Main Library in downtown Akron, the session is free but sign up is required. For more information or to sign up, contact Special Collections at 330.643.9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org.

All Things Cemetery
Summit County OGS
Saturday, July 19, 1 pm
This will be our 3rd annual meeting at a local cemetery. We will provide opportunities for hands-on experience in a variety of areas, including tombstone rubbings, transcription tips, identification of emblems and symbols, a dowsing refresher, and preparing for a cemetery visit. For more information, contact the chapter at summitogs@yahoo.com.

Pittsburgh Pennsylvania: East European Magnet
Federation of East European Family History Societies
August 1-3, 2008
Join us at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel for sessions on Bulgarian & Macedonian and Rusyn & Slovak research. Other topics include Galicia, Jewish, and Catholic records and using Maps, Atlases, and Gazetteers. For more information, please see http://feefhs.org/.

Midwestern Roots 2008
Indiana Historical Society
August 15 & 16, 2008
Join us at the Indianapolis Marriott East for the Annual Conference. The more than 30 presentations by national and regional experts cover a range of topics from sources, methodology, and technology to DNA, storytelling, photograph preservation and much more. For more information, please see http://www.indianahistory.org/midwesternroots/.

Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors
Special Collections
Saturday, August 16, 10 am – noon
Their travels to the United States and along the path to U.S. citizenship are often documented, but finding these records is sometimes a challenge. Join us in Computer Lab 2 of Main Library for information on how to identify immigrant ancestors and locate passenger lists and naturalization records. As we will be using electronic resources, basic computer skills are recommended. For more information or to sign up, contact Special Collections at 330.643.9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org.

23rd Annual Ohio Genealogical Society Chapter Management Seminar
Lorain County Chapter, OGS
Saturday, August 16, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Held at the Holiday Inn of Elyria on State Route 57 between Elyria and Lorain. The nine sessions will help to train current and future Chapter Officers and Chairs in a variety of topics. For more information, contact the Society at ogs@ogs.org.

Introduction to Internet Genealogy
Special Collections
Tuesday, August 26, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Lean about the genealogy databases available through the library as well as how to find and evaluate many popular free genealogy web sites. Basic computer skills are recommended. The class meets in Computer Lab 2, on the first floor of Main Library. For more information or to sign up, contact Special Collections at 330.643.9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org.

Fall Genealogy Conference
African-American Genealogical Society, Cleveland
Friday & Saturday, September 12 & 13
Held at the Cleveland Public Library, downtown. Will feature nationally known presenters, such as Mark Lowe (of African-American Lives) and Tim Pinnick. Will also include workshops and research time at the Cleveland Public Library. For more information, please Contact Mary Brothers-Johnson at robmary17@adelphia.net.

Getting Started in Family History
Special Collections
Saturday, September 13, 10 am – 11:30 am
This orientation includes an overview of the genealogical resources available at the Akron-Summit County Public Library, suggestions for getting started, and tips for organizing your research. Held at the Main Library in downtown Akron, the session is free but sign up is required. For more information or to sign up, contact Special Collections at 330.643.9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org.

We would like to thank the following for their generous donations:

Judy Campbell for *A Listing Entrymen on Lands in Stark County, Ohio* by Richard Kocher

Carl Clark for *The Descendants of Jacob Reaser: 1786-1860 in Augusta County, Virginia*

Ed Davis and Ruth Grenzow for *The Story of the Airship* by Hugh Allen

Tim Defrange for *Goffredo & Orazia's Immigration Story* by Tim Defrange

Betty Eastman for *The Merrill Family* by George F. Merrill

William R. Elms for *The Descendants of Henry Young, volume 1* by William R. Elms and Diana M. Ricks Hart

Ott Gangl for photographs and negatives of the Kenley Players

Garden Forum of Greater Akron for historical materials and documents of the Garden Forum of Greater Akron

Portage Lakes Historical Society for *Gold Rush* by Jeffrey Smith; *Behind the Front Page* by James S. Jackson; *My Dear Carrie* by Robert H. Jones and Caroline Pardee; *Print It!* by Hal Fry; *Glory Days: the Akron Yankees* by Richard McBane; *Summit Beach Park* by Diane and David Francis

Lawrence Joseph Rohr for *The Brewing Era in Akron, Ohio* by Lawrence Joseph Rohr

Cyrus Thornton for *Thornton: Lineage of Cyrus Page Thornton & Family* by Cyrus Page Thornton

New to the Collection

Kentucky

Barren County, Kentucky, unrecorded burials, annotated, the 1880's through May 18, 2006
Boone County, Kentucky, history and biographies
Hardin County, Kentucky, history and biographies
Warren County, Kentucky, marriages 1797-1851

Maryland

Abstracts of the testamentary proceedings of the Prerogative Court of Maryland. Vol. VI: 1686-1689, 1692-1693; Vol. VII: 1693-1697; Vol. VIII: 1697-1700
Historic resource study: Chesapeake & Ohio Canal

Massachusetts

Genealogies of some old families of Concord, Massachusetts, and their descendants: in part to the present generation. Vol. 1

Michigan

Burial records of Lenawee Country, Michigan
Detroit City Cemetery burial records, 1854-1861: Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
Elmwood Cemetery register, 1862-1874: Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
Extractions of births, marriages, deaths and miscellaneous news items from the Michigan Messenger. Vol. I: 1980-1893. Vol. II: 1894-95
Extractions of births, marriages, deaths and miscellaneous news items, including news from the Civil War, from the Tecumseh Herald: scattered dates from 1852-1864; scattered dates from 1880-1895. 2 vols.
Graduates of Adrian public schools, 1857-1901: and graduates of Adrian Training School (for training of teachers), 1883-1902
Headstone readings: Apostolic Christian Cemetery, Bay Co., MI
Headstone readings: Beaver Township Cemetery and Zion Lutheran Cemetery, Bay Co., MI
Headstone readings: Garfield Township Cemetery, Bay Co., MI
Headstone readings: Pinconning Township Cemeteries, "old" and "new", Bay Co. MI
Headstone readings: St. John's Lutheran Memorial Cemetery, Bay Co., MI
Headstone readings: St. Michael's and St. Agnes Catholic cemeteries, Bay Co., MI
Kent County, Michigan, marriage and death newspaper notices
Marriage and death newspaper notices, Wayne County, Michigan, 1809-1868
Marriages and deaths as found in the Michigan Expositor, 1850-1852
Marshall marriage and death newspaper notices
Michigan genealogy: sources & resources
Mt. Elliott Cemetery burial records, 1845-1861: Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
Record of the juvenile inmates of the Home for the Friendless, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan: October, 1862 to 1868
Reports of City Physicians, 1860-1869: Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

New Jersey

New Jersey graveyard and gravestone inscriptions locators: Mercer County
New Jersey graveyard and gravestone inscriptions locators: Monmouth County
New Jersey graveyard and gravestone inscriptions locators: Morris County
The old Jewish cemeteries of Newark

New York

A collection of abstracts from Otsego County, New York, newspaper obituaries, 1808-1875
Distant drums: Herkimer County in the War of the Rebellion
Early histories and descriptions of Oneida County
Early history of Friends in Cayuga County, New York: read before the Cayuga County Historical Society, April 8, 1890, by Miss Emily Howland
Erie County, Obituaries: as found in the files of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society
Historical album of Orleans County, N.Y.
History of Niagara County, N.Y.
Our Brooklyn, New York ancestors: 1796 & beyond
Spafford, Onondaga County, New York

North Carolina

North Carolina slaves and free persons of color: Mecklenburg, Gaston and Union counties

Ohio

Akron churches: early architecture
A fine-looking lot of ball-tossers: the remarkable Akrons of 1881
Footpaths to ancient campsites in Copley Township
A listing of entrymen on lands in Stark Co., Ohio
An illustrated historical atlas of Lucas and part of Wood counties, Ohio
Index to 1851 tax maps of Lorain County, Ohio
Linton Township history (Coshocton Co.)
Mount Calvary Cemetery: established 1885, City of Youngstown, Mahoning County, Ohio. V. 3
New Philadelphia, Democrat obituary excerpts. 2 vols. 1904-1910 (Tuscarawas Co.)
Ohio slate types
Towpath companion: a traveler's guide to the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail
Tuscarawas County, Ohio, connections I, II & III: ancestor charts from across the United States each touching on Tuscarawas County, Ohio
Tuscarawas County, Ohio, index to administration dockets, 1809-1878 & will records, 1809-1910
Tuscarawas County, Ohio, marriages: 1880-1894
Tuscarawas County, Ohio probate court birth records: Auburn & Bucks townships, dockets 1 & 2, 1867-1908
Tuscarawas County, Ohio, probate court birth records: Lawrence Township, dockets 1 & 2, 1867-1898

Pennsylvania

Abstracts of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania wills. Vols. 5, 7 and 9. 1777-1790; 1802-1809; 1820-1825
General index to the Colonial Records, in 16 volumes, and to the Pennsylvania Archives [1st series] in 12 volumes...
Menallen [Pennsylvania] minutes, marriages and miscellany: Quaker records, 1780-1890

Military

Hessian chaplains: their diaries and duties

United States

A guide to Mormon family history sources
Researching your colonial New England ancestors

Germany

In search of your German roots: a complete guide to tracing your ancestors in the Germanic areas of Europe

Israel

Guidebook for Sephardic and Oriental genealogical sources in Israel

Jews

A field guide to visiting a Jewish cemetery: a spiritual journey to the past, present and future
A practical guide to Jewish cemeteries
Where we once walked: a guide to the Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust. Revised

Mexico

Finding your Mexican ancestors: a beginner's guide

Scotland

Scottish Highlanders on the eve of the Great Migrations, 1725-1777: the people of Argyll

Family Histories

Ancestors of Rogers Bruce Johnson: from immigration to the present times, 1620-1996 Volume 2 Addendum

Special Collections Division
Akron-Summit County Public Library
60 South High Street
Akron, Ohio 44326

Bits & Bygones

This ad appeared in the March 6, 1914 issue of the Akron Beacon Journal. Are they saying interesting people need not apply?

The Akron-Summit County Public Library Special Collections Division is located on the third floor of the Main Library.

Contact Special Collections:

By telephone:
330.643.9030

By mail:
Special Collections Division
Akron-Summit County Public Library
60 S. High Street
Akron, Ohio 44326

By e-mail:
speccollections@akronlibrary.org

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